

# **What Works!**

## **Job Strategies for Homeless People**

### **Video Training Package**

#### **I. INTRODUCTION**

Supportive housing is a lifeline for homeless individuals. Over the past decade, the experiences in communities around the country have shown that a secure and caring home environment, combined with needed supportive services, is critical to improving residential stability and to reconnecting homeless people to friends, family, and the community at large.

In recent years, supportive housing providers and other agencies that serve homeless people have begun to focus on helping people move toward more independent living. In working toward this goal, **employment-related services** designed for homeless people have increasingly become an essential component of supportive housing programs in some communities. These services, often created through partnerships with private industry, foundations, and nonprofit organizations, round out the continuum of care that leads to recovery and independence.

#### **Purpose and Contents**

This training package (including video and notebook), has been developed to enable HUD Field Office staff to organize and lead training sessions for supportive housing grantees and other partners on the subject of integrating job strategies and services into supportive housing programs. The purpose of the training is:

- ! to call attention to the integral role that job services play in achieving independent living for individuals; and

- ! to encourage supportive housing providers and their partners to think about ways to provide or improve such services, either through partnerships with other institutions or by creating an in-house employment services staff.

The 35-minute video, ***“What Works! Job Strategies for Homeless People”*** is the centerpiece of the training. The video focuses on three innovative, well-run programs that provide employment services to homeless people, to illustrate how effective programs are planned and operated. These stories demonstrate:

- ! the ***range of activities*** that are often necessary to help a homeless individual get and keep a job;
- ! the ***strategies*** that homeless service providers have adopted to develop and sustain employment-related services; and
- ! the ***challenges and rewards*** that come from helping clients achieve greater self-determination through work.

The video can be used in one of two ways. First, if time is limited, the video can comprise the entire training session, and the resource materials in this notebook could be copied and provided to participants for later review. Thus, the video can be used as a “stand alone” program to be viewed from beginning to end without interruption.

Alternatively, this notebook contains a curriculum for a two- to three-hour training session. The curriculum is structured to allow for each of three segments of the video to be viewed and then discussed. By alternating the video and group discussion activities, the discussion can be directly linked to specific topics that are covered in each segment. The video contains natural transitions that indicate to the trainer where to start or stop the tape.

Presented below is a summary of the video and its main themes. The next section of this notebook presents the training curriculum and discussion guides. The last section provides resource materials, including overview sheets that outline the video’s main themes and detailed summaries of each of the programs featured in the video. If desired, these materials can be copied and distributed to participants.

## **Video Summary**

The ***“What Works!”*** video tells the story of how three organizations around the country have developed comprehensive job service programs for homeless people that are operating within supportive housing environments. The stories are told through interviews with the individuals who run these programs, their partners, and clients who have been served.

The programs include:

- ! the **Jericho Project**, a supportive housing program in New York City, which works exclusively with recovering substance abusers, and seeks to motivate and empower them to regain independence and dignity through a combination of housing, supportive services, and job training; to provide job services, Jericho created an in-house vocational and educational department with a four-person staff; in addition to offering assessment, counseling, and placement services, Jericho provides work opportunities within the supportive housing buildings;
- ! the **Center for the Homeless** in South Bend, Indiana, which seeks to help a variety of homeless people (i.e., substance abusers, mentally ill, abused) improve their lives holistically—mentally, emotionally, physically, and spiritually—to break the “cycle of homelessness;” the Center has developed a unique, six-step process to help individuals move from emergency shelter to homeownership, with job preparation and placement as a central component; the Center has also developed many successful partnerships which allow for a truly comprehensive set of services to be provided for their clients; and
- ! the **Options Program** in Jacksonville, Florida, which is an employment program with a focus on “work first,” or the “place and train” model; operated by Goodwill Industries, Options delivers its comprehensive job services program on-site to a variety of local shelters and supportive housing developments.

While these three programs present very different models and somewhat different philosophies about helping homeless people join the workforce, they share some important characteristics:

- ! First, they all operate in settings that offer stable housing and are rich with other supportive services.
- ! Second, they rely on partnerships or coalitions with nonprofit agencies and businesses to make their programs work.
- ! Third, they have all adopted a counseling model that places as much emphasis on follow-up as it does on offering a wide range of assistance in locating that first job.
- ! Finally, they are all committed to helping homeless people find work that is both meaningful and financially self-sustaining in the long-term.

## II. TRAINING CURRICULUM AND DISCUSSION GUIDES

This section presents a suggested curriculum for the training, outlines steps to take in preparing for the video training session, and provides topics for discussion at selected points during and at the conclusion of the video.

### **Training Curriculum**

As noted in the first section of this notebook, the video ***“What Works”*** can be used as a stand-alone instructional piece or it can be part of a two to three hour training session where participants discuss the topics presented in the video and explore how the experiences of the three selected programs may be relevant to their work. The training curriculum presented below uses the video as the starting point for discussion. Participants view each of the three video segments (roughly 11 minutes each). After each video segment, there is a discussion of the information that has been presented. At the conclusion of the video, there is an opportunity to make some cross-site comparisons and to discuss more broadly the job services that the participants now provide (if they do provide them) and how they can be enhanced or developed.

**What Works!  
Job Strategies for Homeless People  
Training Session Curriculum**

- I. Introduction (5 minutes)  
(Trainer explains purpose of the session and the training format)
- II. What Works! Video  
First Video Segment: The Jericho Project (11 minutes)  
Discussion: The Jericho Project (15 minutes)  
(Key topics: comprehensive employment services, job preparation before job placement, building relationships with employers, on-site employment, and developing a nonprofit business)
- III. Second Video Segment: The Center for the Homeless (11 minutes)  
Discussion: The Center for the Homeless (15 minutes)  
(Key topics: the Center's holistic recovery process, developing partnerships, staffing services to encourage developed jobs not spot jobs, and supported employment and for-profit businesses)
- IV. Third Video Segment: The Options Program, plus video end (14 minutes)  
Discussion: The Options Program (15 minutes)  
(Key topics: providing employment services through a coalition that includes local employers, "work first" as part of the recovery process, managing "turf" issues, Job Junction, job coaching and follow-up, and other needed services)
- V. Final Discussion and Wrap-up (30 to 45 minutes)  
(Key topics: cross-site comparisons, employment and your agency mission, building an employment services program, developing in-house expertise or relying on partners, partnerships, defining "success," and addressing recidivism)

**Preparing for the Training Session**

In preparation for the training session, remember to take the following steps:

- 1. Watch the video and review the discussion guides and resource materials at the end of this notebook. While discussion guides are provided, some questions may not be relevant to your group, or there may be additional questions you wish

to add in order to emphasize a particular topic. Modify the discussion guides to suit the needs of your participants.

2. Send a letter of invitation to those who you wish to attend, describing the purpose and approximate length of the training session. A sample letter is presented on the following page. Ask invitees to RSVP if they will be attending.
3. Once you know the number of attendees, make room and equipment arrangements (television and VCR with a remote control).
4. Review the resource materials contained in the next section of this notebook. The summary sheets can be used to create overhead slides to assist with the discussions. There are also one-page summaries and detailed descriptions of each of the programs covered in the video. They can be copied and handed out at the end of the training session.
5. Prepare some brief introductory remarks. Explain the format for the training—video viewing of program segments, interspersed with discussion. You may wish to remind participants to consider some key questions as they view the video; for example: What are the key features of this program, including services provided, model for delivering services, and program strategies and issues? What aspects of this program would work for my agency or program?

Presented below are guides that can be used to lead participants in a discussion after each segment of the video has been viewed by participants.

### **Jericho Project: Issues for Discussion**

**!** *Comprehensive in-house employment services:* Jericho offers a wide range of employment services in-house. Review what these services are and discuss why each is necessary. Note that Jericho's services include:

- 1) assessment/case management (i.e., helping a client focus on what s/he can do);
- 2) pre-vocational activities (i.e., GED, ESL classes);
- 3) soft-skills development (i.e., communication, time management, appropriate dress, emotion/stress management);
- 4) job search training (i.e., interviewing skills and resume development, job search strategies);

## SAMPLE LETTER

[Date]

[Agency]

[Street]

[City, State, ZIP]

Dear :

Over the last few years, communities around the country have found that offering homeless people a secure and caring home environment, combined with needed supportive services, is critical to improving residential stability and to reconnecting them to friends, family, and the community at large. As supportive housing providers and other agencies that serve homeless move toward helping their clients achieve more independent living, employment-related services have increasingly become essential. HUD encourages all supportive housing grantees to provide comprehensive services for the homeless, which include a strong employment services component.

With this in mind, I would like to invite you to participate in a training session titled, ***“What Works: Job Strategies for Homeless Persons.”*** The centerpiece of the training is a video describing several innovative programs around the country that are helping formerly homeless people to find and maintain employment. This seminar will be held on **[day of the week]**, **[month] [day]**, **[year]**, at **[location]**, from **[starting time]** to **[ending time]**. Even if your agency already provides some employment services, we encourage you to attend the session as a resource for new ideas to expand or improve your program.

Please call me at **[phone number]** by **[date one week before training]** to let me know whether you plan on attending. I look forward to hearing from you!

Sincerely,

[Name]

[Title]

- 5) job development (finding jobs in a partner's organization that can be filled by clients);
- 6) job coaching or support (employment follow-up);
- 7) supported employment/site-based employment (jobs within the supportive housing setting); and
- 8) affirmative businesses (independent businesses, such as the Computer Learning Center, created specifically to provide sheltered employment and training opportunities to clients).

- ! *Job preparation before job placement:* Jericho places its first emphasis on helping clients to identify a job or a career that they want to pursue and assisting them in preparing for that job. Other programs emphasize a “work first” approach. What are the advantages and disadvantages of the Jericho model?
- ! *On-site employment:* What are the benefits and the drawbacks of providing in-house jobs for residents?
- ! *Developing a nonprofit business:* Jericho's Computer Learning Center is well-received by clients, but has yet to succeed from a financial or business perspective. What are the pros and cons of nonprofit businesses created with the primary goal of providing training opportunities to clients?
- ! *Building relationships with employers:* Jericho's job developer worked hard to develop connections with local businesses only to discover that the jobs that employers offered did not match the skills of the clients. This seems to be a common dilemma. How can it be avoided?

### **Center for the Homeless: Issues for Discussion**

- ! *The Center's holistic recovery process:* The Center's step-by-step process focuses on helping individuals to move up a ladder of independence, with employment as an intermediate goal and homeownership as the ultimate goal. What do you think of this approach? How does this compare with your agency's philosophy? Is homeownership an achievable goal for at least some of your residents? Why or why not?
- ! *Developing partnerships:* While the Jericho Project relies on its own staff to deliver services to its clients, the Center relies on partnerships with outside organizations to obtain the best services and resources for their clients. What are the advantages and disadvantages of each approach? How difficult is it to create and maintain partnerships over time?
- ! *Developed jobs versus spot jobs:* What are the benefits/drawbacks to spot jobs or “under the table” employment? How does the on-site presence of a staffing services company help the Center and its clients? Why is prescreening potential employers important?



- ! *Supported employment and for-profit businesses:* The Center appears to have been more successful than the Jericho Project in creating a successful business venture. What does it take to build a successful business?

### Options Program: Issues for Discussion

- ! *Providing employment services through a coalition:* The Options program was created by housing providers, local employers, and others who recognized the need for employment services and determined that they would best be provided to all by Goodwill Industries. What are the ingredients to making this type of service model work? What are the advantages to such a model? The disadvantages?
- ! *“Work first” as part of the recovery process:* Options takes a somewhat different approach than the Jericho Project in that job placement is their immediate goal. What are the benefits/drawbacks of “placing and training” individuals soon after they enter a homeless facility?
- ! *Managing “turf” issues:* Valerie Baham described how case managers and employment counselors sometimes disagree on what is best for a client. These kinds of issues often arise when more than one individual manages a client’s recovery. What can be done to alleviate “turf” issues?
- ! *Job coaching and follow-up:* How critical are these in terms of the package of services provided to homeless clients?
- ! *Other needed services:* Transportation is a particular problem in Jacksonville. What are barriers to employment in your community? How are they or can they be addressed?

### Questions for Discussion Following the Video

- ! *Cross-site comparisons:* The programs featured in this video have a number of common features as well as some differences. What are they? Which features are essential to an employment services program? [Some common features include: they all operate in settings rich with other supportive services; they rely on partnerships or coalitions; they have all adopted a counseling model that places emphasis on follow-up services; and they are committed to helping homeless people find work that is both meaningful and financially self-sustaining in the long-term.]
- ! *Employment and your agency mission:* How do employment services fit into your agency’s mission? [Note: If an agency’s primary purpose is to provide housing and supportive services to the homeless, it may be necessary to **revisit the agency’s mission**. Recent experience suggests that employment services need to be equal to and not a subset of other supportive services.]

- ! *Building an employment services program:* What employment services does your agency currently offer (either in-house or through other agencies)? [Encourage participants to think about the range of services that their organizations provide now and how they can develop a program that builds on these services so that they lead logically towards sustained employment.] What resources are needed to help people stay employed, such as transportation and day care?
- ! *Developing in-house expertise or relying on partners:* Will you develop internal staff capacity (i.e., hire new staff or train existing staff) or provide space for partner organizations to help residents with job training, search, and retention?
- ! *Partnerships:* Accessing community resources and creating partnerships with businesses and other institutions in the community may be key. What are some ways you can develop partnerships with local organizations that will be mutually beneficial? How do you identify organizations with missions/visions similar to yours?
- ! *Defining “success:”* How will you define what a “successful” or “effective” program is? The more disabled the population, the harder it will be to help people become stably employed. Will your definitions of “successful” and “effective” give you the courage to work with the tougher populations **and** help as many of your clients as possible live more independently?
- ! *Addressing recidivism:* Even under the best of circumstances, there may still be a high job turnover or rate of job loss among clients, due either to the client or external forces. How will you handle this, and how will you help your clients handle this?

### **III. RESOURCE MATERIALS**

The pages that follow contain:

- ! overview sheets that highlight the main themes of the video;
- ! one -page summaries of each program; and
- ! detailed descriptions of each of the programs.

All of these materials can be copied and distributed to training participants.

***What Works!***  
**Overview Sheets**

***What Works!***

***Job Strategies for Homeless People***

**Common Themes of the Three Programs**



- Stable Housing and Services
- Partnerships
- Follow-up Support

# The Jericho Project



- Client Assessment and Counseling
- Program Management
- On-Site Supported Employment
- Nonprofit Business
- Working with Employers

# Center For The Homeless



- Comprehensive Services and a Step-by-Step Recovery Process
- Partnerships
- On-Site Staffing Services
- Assessing Business Needs

# The Options Program



- Job Coaching
- Job Junction
- Working with Employers
- Follow-up Services
- Addressing Barriers to Work



# Program Delivery Models



## ■ Jericho

- In-house Vocational/Education Department (with own staff)

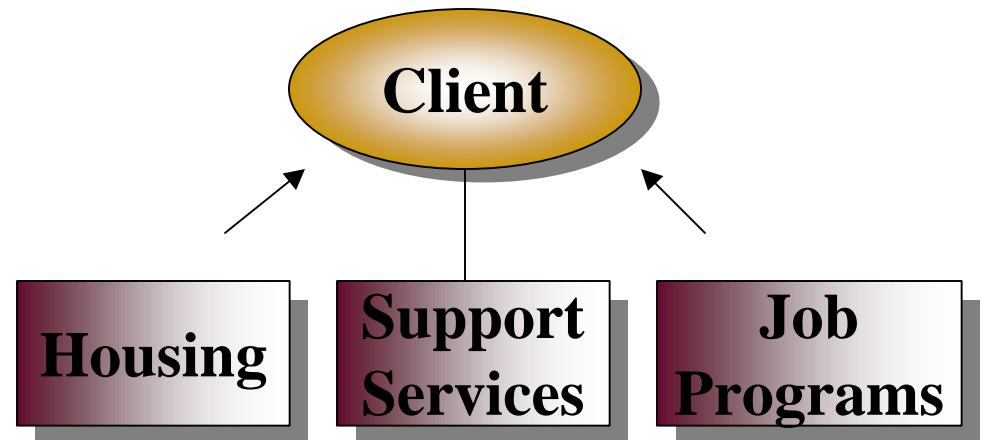
## ■ Center for the Homeless

- On-site Job Services Provided by Staff and Partner Agencies

## ■ Options Program

- Employment Program Deploys Staff to Supportive Housing Sites

# Role of Job Training & Employment in Supportive Housing



***What Works!***  
**Program Summaries**

## **The Jericho Project**

### **New York City, New York**

The Jericho Project, a supportive housing program in New York City, works exclusively with recovering substance abusers, and seeks to motivate and empower them to regain independence and dignity through a combination of housing, supportive services, and job training.

Founded in 1983, the Jericho Project provides permanent supportive housing to 238 homeless individuals at five sites in Manhattan and in the Bronx. In 1995, an in-house vocational and educational department was established at Jericho with a four-person staff. This program provides a range of job-related services, from assessment and counseling to job development and placement.

The Jericho staff tailor their program to the needs of the individual clients. Each client develops an individualized vocational plan, which outlines the steps they will take to reach greater independence. The vocational and educational department provides the supports that help them along the way. In working with clients initially, the department offers a series of workshops to help develop the skills necessary to look for and keep a job. Educational resources, (such as tutoring and GED classes), are also offered both on- and off-site.

For clients who are not ready for immediate employment, the department provides on-site transitional work opportunities through the Jericho Works Project (JWP). JWP enables clients to gain job experience at the supportive housing site by working as a receptionist or as a maintenance worker. This allows the client to improve on some of their “soft skills” and work habits—getting along with people, learning to show up for work on time—and it allows staff to observe client behavior in a work environment.

When an individual is ready for outside employment, the Jericho job developer steps in. The job developer works with employers to identify appropriate placements for clients. Jericho provides counseling and follow-up support once a client is placed.

In recent years, The Jericho Project embarked on the creation of a nonprofit business, the Computer Learning Center, which is located next to one of the supportive housing sites. The Center provides computer classes and business services (fax, copy services, etc.) to the general public, but it's primary purpose is to provide a training facility for Jericho clients. While this facility is not financially self-supporting, it has already met the primary objective of providing clients with the opportunity to obtain needed computer skills. The Center also provides employment opportunities to clients participating in JWP.

## **The Center for the Homeless South Bend, Indiana**

The Center for the Homeless in South Bend, Indiana provides a wide array of services to help homeless individuals and families recover their lives and move towards self sufficiency. The idea that people need a holistic recovery, whether their homelessness is the result of substance abuse, mental illness, domestic violence, or any other reason, permeates the Center's overall mission: to "help people break the cycle of homelessness; bring together disparate groups so that each can discover the worth, dignity, and God-given potential of the other; and pioneer a service model worthy of replication." Staffed by 29 full-time and nine part-time staff, the Center can house approximately 140 men, women, and children.

The model of care established by the Center helps people move from homelessness to self-sufficiency in six phases. In the **first phase**, guests are given emergency shelter, introduced to the Center's programs and expectations, and referred to any outside services (i.e., substance abuse treatment) as necessary. The **second phase** involves personal development and education in the form of the Center's five-week Starting Over/Stepping Higher seminar, which focuses on issues, such as self-esteem and soft skills, which contribute both to recovery and job retention. Upon graduation from this seminar, guests move into the **third phase**, another five-week seminar (BRAVO!) which focuses on job training and placement and includes emphasis on both hard and soft skills. The **fourth phase** narrows in on job retention and budgeting issues (job club, consumer credit counseling, mentorship). In the **fifth phase**, guests who have found and maintained employment may move to financially supported housing, participate in an evening support group, and begin to volunteer as mentors for other guests at the Center. Finally, guests who have successfully maintained employment for one year enter the **sixth phase**—beginning the process of becoming a homeowner. Guests may still volunteer at the Center or in the community, as well as receive case management services.

Through key partnerships (identified by staff as critical to the Center's operations), the Center also offers many on-site services—available to all guests at any time—which contribute both to guests' well-being and their ability to maintain employment. These services include:

- ! The Play, Exploration, and Development Support (PEDS) program for children up to the age of three—this service frees working parents at the Center from the need to find day care;
- ! A Montessori class, run by a local school, for children ages three through six;
- ! A clinic staffed through a local hospital;
- ! Meal service, staffed by volunteers and guests of the Center, provided in a dining-hall setting;
- ! A computer center; and
- ! A chapel with religious services and meetings offered by several different organizations.

## **The Options Program Jacksonville, Florida**

The Options Program in Jacksonville, Florida, is an employment program operated by Goodwill Industries of North Florida. Options was created by a coalition of some 30 homeless service providers, private businesses and others who recognized that a comprehensive employment program was an important unmet need for homeless clients in the Jacksonville area.

Now entering its third year of operation, The Options Program delivers its comprehensive job services program on-site to a variety of local shelters and supportive housing developments. The Options staff include a full-time program manager and nine full-time employment specialists who are placed at various housing locations.

The Options staff offer the following services:

- ! individualized assessment and job search support provided on-site at residential centers;
- ! intensive job coaching for individuals requiring such assistance, especially those with psychiatric disabilities;
- ! training activities to orient newcomers, and make connections to potential employers; and
- ! assistance in overcoming barriers to employment, such as transportation or day care.

In addition, Goodwill is able to use its other employment programs to supplement what is provided by Options. For example, Goodwill runs “Job Junctions” sites at locations throughout Jacksonville. These employment service centers are a source of job announcements and have trained employment specialists to assist clients with resume preparation and job leads. Goodwill also runs HR Options, a customized recruitment and screening program for employers.

The Options program is dedicated to the notion of “work first” or the “place and train” model. However, once a job is obtained, Goodwill is committed to working with staff to find a job that may pay better and/or meet career goals. Follow-up is seen as critical. Employment specialists will typically follow newly-employed clients for one year to ensure a successful outcome. If a problem does arise, they work with the client and the employer to arrange a solution.

***What Works!***  
**Detailed Program Descriptions**